Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) Consultation

Response from Goldsmiths, University of London

In November 2017, the Government asked the former HEFCE to lead on developing the knowledge exchange framework, to support the Government's Industrial Strategy.

Consultation responses on the proposals for the knowledge exchange framework were invited from any higher education institution, association, organisation or individual with an interest in knowledge exchange through an online consultation survey. The consultation closed on Thursday 14 March 2019.

Goldsmiths' substantive responses to the consultation questions are shown below.

Page 6: KEF purpose

Q8. Do you consider that the KEF as outlined will fulfil its stated purposes? To provide universities with new tools to understand, benchmark and improve their performance. To provide business and other users with more information on universities. To provide greater public visibility and accountability.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
To provide universities with new tools to understand, benchmark and improve their performance.				X			
To provide businesses and other users with more information on universities.				X			
To provide greater public visibility and accountability.				X			

Q9. Please provide a commentary in relation to your scores above. (400 word limit)

- there is some value in the proposed metrics for KEF to compare some KE activity across institutions, but there is significant activity which doesn't have immediate financial value that isn't made visible. The proposed narrative statements are helpful and additional narrative statements across the all the proposed perspectives would be beneficial.
- it is unclear as to how extensive consultation with business and other users has been regarding the utility of KEF and the presentation of KEF data nor whether such data will provide better understanding for businesses and other users of the attractiveness for future KE relationships with HEIs (i.e. in contrast to relationships developed through localised knowledge)
- it is debatable the extent to which KEF will provide significant public visibility; and, regarding

Q9. Please provide a commentary in relation to your scores above. (400 word limit)
accountability, the proposed metrics may drive unwanted behaviour or simply be under utilised.

Page 7: Aims and overall approach of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

Q10. Overall approachThe KEF consultation document describes the overall approach as being an annual, institutional level, largely metrics driven exercise, although noting that narrative will have an important role. More background may be found in the report summarising the recommendations of the technical advisory group. Do you consider this overall approach to be appropriate?
Somewhat agree

Q11. Please provide a commentary in relation to your scores above. (400 word limit)
- the work of Research England on this is certainly appreciated, but more testing is needed - in order to underline the value of the narrative statements, they need to be assessed. The proposition from the NCCPE presents one helpful way forward for assessment - it would be useful to capture and present non-HEI partner information (e.g. 'reviews'), to capture more explicitly routes to KE activity (i.e. as pedagogic examples for other HEIs and non-HEIs), and to value KE activity with international partners but also in the context of international benefit (e.g. in alignment with GCRF priorities)

Page 8: Clustering

Q12. Please indicate your degree of support for the following aspects of our clustering approach.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
The conceptual framework that underpins the cluster analysis.					X		
The variables and methods employed in undertaking the cluster analysis.				X			
The resulting make up of the clusters, i.e. the membership.			X				
That the overall approach to clustering helps Research England to meet the stated purposes of the KEF and ensures fair				X			

Q12. Please indicate your degree of support for the following aspects of our clustering approach.							
comparison.							

Q13. Please provide commentary on any aspect of your scores above. If relevant please incorporate suggestions for alternative arrangements. (400 word limit)

- while the framework for the cluster analysis sets out a statistical approach to deriving the cluster groups, a review of the metrics used indicates that there is closer alignment between Goldsmiths and those institutions in cluster X. Our world-leading research and configuration of our student population more closely matches the median position of cluster X with higher proportions of 4* research, smaller part-time undergraduate population and strong recruitment in postgraduate studies in relation to cluster E. While we have a greater proportion of non-STEM subjects compared to the cluster X median, leading to less research funding from the UK government and research councils, this is not out of line with other institutions currently in cluster X. Conversely, many of the characteristics of Cluster E institutions are not shared by Goldsmiths. On this basis we believe Goldsmiths sits more comfortably as part of cluster X.
- the letter nominations for each cluster is unlikely to prevent any relative evaluations across clusters (i.e. as in football leagues)
- currently there is no clarity regarding the process by nor timing at which an institution may be able to move from one cluster to another; and the fact that the metrics for 'rankings' within a cluster are not those for the composition of a cluster means that an HEI may excel in the former (and outperform across all clusters), but be perceived to be in a cluster with lesser value. The relation between the metrics and reputational (and public perceived) value do not seem to have been fully considered.

Q14. If you are responding on behalf of an institution that is a member of the proposed specialist social science and business (SSB) or STEM clusters as listed below and you wish to provide specific feedback on the appropriateness of these clusters, please identify your cluster membership here. SSB University College Birmingham Bishop Grosseteste University Heythrop College, University of London London Business School National Film and Television School STEM The Institute of Cancer Research Liverpool School of Tropical Med London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Royal Veterinary College St George's, University of London Cranfield University Harper Adams University Royal Agricultural University Writtle University College

Not applicable

Page 10: Perspectives and metrics

Q16. Perspectives Research partnerships Working with business Working with the public and third sector Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship Local growth and regeneration IP and commercialisation Public and community engagement Taking into account the overall range of perspectives and metrics outlined in the consultation document, do you agree or disagree that a sufficiently broad range of KE activities is captured.

Somewhat agree

Comments:
- as stated above, it would be helpful to capture activity which does not immediately generate financial value. The proposed KEF currently fails to sufficiently recognise 'social responsibility' and civic KE activity to such an extent that institutions which are oriented to such activity in a major way will be misrepresented and under valued. This could be damaging to such institutions and to the sector. -

Q16. Perspectives Research partnerships Working with business Working with the public and third sector Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship Local growth and regeneration IP and commercialisation Public and community engagement Taking into account the overall range of perspectives and metrics outlined in the consultation document, do you agree or disagree that a sufficiently broad range of KE activities is captured.

there is also insufficient focus on collaborative KE activity across HEIs which will not be captured

Q17. Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document, please indicate whether you consider that they adequately represent performance in each of the proposed perspectives.

Research partnerships	50% support
Working with business	50% support
Working with the public and third sector	50% support
Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship	50% support
Local growth and regeneration	76% support
IP and commercialisation	50% support
Public and community engagement	76% support

Q18. Research partnerships Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

No additional comment

Q19. Working with business Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

No additional comment

Q20. Working with the public and third sector Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

No additional comment

Q21. Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

No additional comment

Q22. Local growth and regeneration Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit) Note there is a separate question to consider the use of supplementary narrative.

No additional comment

Q23. IP and commercialisation Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

No additional comment

Q24. Public and community engagement Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit) Note there is a separate question to consider the use of supplementary narrative.

No additional comment

Page 11: Supplementary narrative

Q25. Do you consider it appropriate for HEIs to provide narrative text to support the metrics in perspectives that don't currently have fully developed metrics?

Strongly agree

Q26. Public and community engagement narrative Overall, is the guidance on the provision of narrative text for this perspective clear.

Agree

Q27. Please comment on the proposal to include narrative from HEIs for the public and community engagement perspective, in particular: - where further clarification is required- where refinements could be made- whether there are areas where more consistency across HEIs could be achieved (400 word limit)

No additional comment

Q28. Local growth and regeneration narrative Overall, is the guidance on the provision of narrative text for this perspective clear.

Agree

Q29. Please comment on the proposal to include narrative from HEIs for the local growth and regeneration perspective, in particular: - where further clarification is required- where refinements could be made- whether there are areas where more consistency across HEIs could be achieved (400 word limit)

No additional comment

Q30. The role of further narrative or contextual information We welcome responses on what other types of narrative or contextual information would be helpful. You may wish to consider, for example: Should the HEI or Research England provide other narrative information? How should we use other contextual information, such as information on local economic competitiveness described in section 5 of the cluster analysis report? Would other perspectives benefit significantly from further narrative information? Would the benefit of adding further narrative information be outweighed by the burden of doing so?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
Overarching institutional statement - provided by the HEI						X	
Overarching institutional statement - provided by Research England			X				

Page 12: Visualisation

Q31. Visualisation Please indicate your level of support for the proposed method of comparison and visualisation. (A link to a video walkthrough of the KEF visualisation is available here.)

Each of the seven perspectives is to be given equal weighting.	50% support
Metrics under each perspective are to be normalised and summed.	50% support
The performance of each HEI is to be expressed in a radar chart in deciles, relative to the mean average decile of the peer group.	75% support
Perspectives are not intended to be aggregated into a single score.	100% support
Narratives are to be presented alongside the metric score, making it clear that metrics in the two perspectives of public & community engagement and local growth & regeneration are provisional, and should be read in conjunction with the narratives.	100% support
Visualisation is to be delivered through an interactive, online dashboard which will allow exploration of the data underlying the 'headline' results in various ways.	80% support

Q32. Please comment on the presentation and visualisation proposals, for example:- where further clarification is required- where refinements could be made- whether there are areas where more consistency across HEIs could be achieved- how narratives could be incorporated?(400 word limit)

- regarding normalising and summing, this has the potential to mask where an institution is performing well within a perspective. A similar approach is used in some broadsheet press league tables which can often create confusion about the methodology employed and what should be interpreted from the metric.
- figure 3 in the consultation document allowing drill down within each individual perspective is welcomed.
- the intention of an online dashboard is welcomed but it must be user friendly with clear definitions and user guidance to allow accurate interpretation and understanding. Clear guidance on the source of data and method of calculation would aid this interpretation.

Page 13: Implementation

Q33. We will pilot the implementation with a group of HEIs as described in the consultation document. Please provide any comments about the implementation of the KEF. (200 word limit)

- a phased implementation allowing for appropriate preparation would be welcomed.

Page 14: Any other comments

Q34. If you have any other comments, please share them here. (400 word limit)

We think that it's important for KEF to take into account the FTE of supporting staff (and the scale of KE support in institutions) in order to assess the scale and quantity of activity that is possible. At the moment, this doesn't seem to be a consideration.